
Confidentiality of Persons Served/Minimum Necessary Requirements

Policy

It is the policy of Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (CFBHN) to comply with federal and state law related to the confidentiality of persons served, and the protection of their health information. This includes, but is not limited to, defined statutes related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA, 45 CFR Part 160-164), 42 CFR Part 2, 397.501(7) F.S., and 394.4615 F.S.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline CFBHN policies and procedures regarding the confidentiality of persons served, and to limit unnecessary or inappropriate access to, and disclosure of, their protected health information.

Procedure

A. Confidentiality Guidelines for CFBHN Staff Members

1. All CFBHN employees are expected to abide by the provisions of federal and state law related to the confidentiality of persons served and the protection of their health information. As defined in the *HIPAA Sanctions* policy, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.
2. At hire, and on an annual basis thereafter, CFBHN employees complete a HIPAA privacy and data security awareness training. Completion of these trainings is required for staff members to initiate or maintain access to the network's Information Technology (IT) and data systems. Training documentation is maintained by CFBHN's Human Resources department.
3. Staff are required to adhere to HIPAA privacy and security guidelines while working in the office, or remotely from their home or field location.
4. Staff members are not permitted to share their passwords with others. Passwords must be kept secure at all times.
5. Staff are not permitted to make any changes to security or administrative settings on CFBHN-issued equipment.
6. Only CFBHN employees are permitted to utilize CFBHN-issued equipment. Others, including family members, are not permitted to utilize equipment that is the property of CFBHN.
7. Staff are not permitted to utilize personal devices to access CFBHN data. In addition, CFBHN-related data is not permitted on personal devices, including laptops, cell phones, tablets and thumb drives. This includes CFBHN billing and service data, reports, identifying information and protected health information (PHI).
8. Texting of identifying information or PHI is not permitted.
9. Staff must utilize the Net Extender VPN to access CFBHN data systems while working off-site.

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10. Staff must position workstations and computer screens out of the sight of others to prevent the unauthorized view of identifying information, PHI and/or other sensitive data.
11. Staff must close and log out of programs containing identifying information, PHI or other sensitive data when they are not in use. Staff must lock, log out, or shut down the computer before walking away from the device.
12. Microsoft Teams, or another HIPAA-compliant platform, must be utilized to conduct teleconferencing sessions that include identifying information or PHI.
13. Phone or teleconferencing discussions that involve identifying information, PHI or other sensitive data, must be held in a private setting. A private setting is defined as an area that is not accessible by, or in earshot of, members of the public, family members or other individuals who are not involved in the meeting or conversation.
14. Staff access permissions to personal information and/or PHI of persons served is determined by the responsibilities of their job duties at CFBHN. Two levels of data access are identified:
 - A. FULL access applies to CFBHN positions with job responsibilities that involve contract oversight, finance and program compliance monitoring, utilization management, care coordination, program management, quality improvement activities and incident investigation. These positions require full access to the data shared with CFBHN by its Network Service Providers (NSPs):
 - 1) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operations Officer (COO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Clinical Officer (CCO)
 - 2) Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Director, Manager and Quality Specialists
 - 3) Risk Manager and Risk Specialist
 - 4) Clinical program Specialists, Utilization Managers, Program Managers, Community Managers and Housing Specialists
 - 5) Director of Contracts, Contract Manager and Contract Specialists
 - 6) IT staff and Data Analysts
 - 7) Financial Analysts
 - B. LIMITED access permissions apply to CFBHN position with job responsibilities that involve incidental contact with PHI, including data entry, billing, typing and correspondence. These activities may require the review of a subset of patients' PHI to ensure data accuracy. This includes the following positions:
 - 1) Consumer and Family Affairs staff
 - 2) Human Resources Consultant
 - 3) Accountants and Fiscal Assistants
 - 4) Facilities Manager/Executive Assistant
 - 5) Administrative Assistants
15. Staff are not permitted to share personal or identifying information, PHI or other sensitive client data with others. This includes co-workers who do not require the information to do their job.

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- A) Requests for treatment records of persons served require the completion of an *Authorization to Release* form, signed by the person served their guardian or legal representative.
 - 1) Authorization for release requests may be made electronically or in writing. Copies of all disclosure requests and completed Authorization forms are kept on file by CFBHN.
 - 2) Verbal authorizations are not accepted.
 - 3) This type of request is managed by the Chief Clinical Officer or the Privacy Officer. (*Please also see CFBHN's 'Authorization to Release Client Information' policy*)
 - B) Subpoenas, court orders, search warrants, investigations, and any other CFBHN-related legal requests are handled by the Chief Operating Officer and/or Human Resources. (*Please also see CFBHN's 'Subpoenas, Court Orders, and other Legal Matters' policy*)
 - C) As applicable, staff members must follow the HIPAA 'Minimum Necessary' requirement outlined in Section C of this policy.
16. Identifying information and PHI must be encrypted or password-protected before it is sent electronically outside of the organization.
17. Staff are required to report unprotected identifying information or PHI sent to them from someone outside of CFBHN. They must also make a report when unprotected data is sent by them to someone outside of CFBHN. The report must be made to the Risk Management department by creating an internal incident in the RL6 system.
18. To the extent possible, staff should avoid printing hard copies of data reports that contain identifying information, PHI, and/or other sensitive data while working off-site. If printing is necessary, the document must be edited to remove or limit sensitive data, identifying information and/or PHI to the minimum necessary.
19. Hard copies of documents that contain identifying information, PHI or other sensitive data must be secured in a manner that protects them from access by unauthorized individuals.
 - A) This type of data must be stored in a locked file cabinet, case, or drawer.
 - B) Staff must use a locked case to transport hard copies of sensitive information or data reports that contain identifying information or PHI. Staff are not permitted to leave a locked case that contains sensitive data, identifying information or PHI in a car overnight or for extended periods of time. Locked cases that contain protected data must be secured in the car's trunk for short stops during a commute.
 - C) Staff must use a shredder to destroy data reports, identifying information or PHI that is no longer needed. Use of cross-cut shredders is the preferred method of destroying documents. Hard copies that include PHI may also be placed into the secure, locked bins located at CFBHN's main office.
20. Staff must alert the IT department if access to a CFBHN database or data source is no longer required.
21. Staff must report any privacy and/or security issues to their supervisor, and CFBHN's HIPAA Privacy and Security Officers.


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C. Confidentiality Requirements for Network Service Providers (NSPs)

1. Each NSP is responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of policies and procedures that meet applicable regulatory, licensure, and accreditation standards related to client records and the release of protected health information (PHI). NSPs are required to ensure their staff are aware of, and comply with, these standards.
2. CFBHN enters into a Business Associate Agreement with each NSP and business entities involved within the network, to maintain compliance with confidentiality requirements and required health information protections.

D. HIPAA ‘Minimum Necessary’ Requirement

1. The HIPAA Privacy rule requires covered entities to take reasonable steps to limit the use or disclosure of, and requests for, protected health information to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose.
2. CFBHN evaluates each request on an individual, case-by-case basis to ensure the disclosure includes only the minimum amount of information that is needed. This is permitted by the Privacy Rule when the request is made by:
 - a. Another covered entity;
 - b. A researcher with appropriate documentation from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Privacy Board;
 - c. A public official or agency that states that the information requested is the minimum necessary for a purpose permitted under 45 CFR 164.512 of the Rule, such as for public health purposes (45 CFR 164.512(b)).
3. The minimum necessary standard does not apply in the following instances:
 - a. Disclosures to, or requests by, a health care provider for treatment purposes;
 - b. Disclosures to the individual who is the subject of the information;
 - c. Uses or disclosures made pursuant to an individual’s authorization.
 - d. Uses or disclosures required for compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Administrative Simplification Rules.
 - e. Disclosures to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) when disclosure of information is required under the Privacy Rule for enforcement purposes.
 - f. Uses or disclosures that are required by other law.

<p>Confidentiality of Persons Served/Minimum Necessary</p> <p>Approval:  Linda McKinnon, President/Chief Executive Officer</p>	<p>Date Issued: <u>11/01/2002</u></p> <p>Last Revision: <u>04/06/2021</u></p> <p>Review Date: <u>04/06/2021</u></p>
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